

THE IMPORTANCE OF ICT IN PRESENT EDUCATION SYSTEM ESPECIALLY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING & LEARNING PROCESS - A DISCUSSION

BY:- DR. BHARATI NAYAK

ABSTRACT

The present society is known as the age of Computer. In this modern era of information and technology due to Globalization and Commercialization English language teaching (ELT) has become an integral part of our education system and occupies a pivotal position. The integration of ICT in English Language Teaching, as Foreign Language or Second Language has made the teaching and learning easier, authentic, active and effective. It has also affected the traditional teaching and learning process and has brought changes in the traditional teaching pattern & in roles of teachers. This paper identifies the role of ICT in assessment practices in education. The significant factors that schools and teachers should consider include the benefits it can provide to improve and enhance assessment. The primary focus of this paper is: What are the roles ICT can provide to support assessment in education and educational assessment practices?

The breakthrough of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has dramatically changed the modern life in almost all the aspects. The association of ICT in our daily life is inevitable.

KEY-WORDS:- Role of ICT in Teaching & Learning process, resources availability, learning objective, English as a second / foreign language, students- centered learning outcomes, result oriented.

INTRODUCTION

ICT has become an integral part in our day to day life due to the great influence of internet & technology. In the past few years English language teaching has undergone drastic changes with the advent of latest methodologies and techniques. Language teachers have accommodated themselves with the technology & ready to accumulate with the current trends to create inquisitiveness among the students community and prepare them for challenges of future globalization. The remarkable entry of technology has created changes in all aspects of society. The impact of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on the fields like tourism & travel, business, banks, medicines, engineering and architecture etc. is enormous. The inevitable impact of ICT has penetrated in such a manner that without it the system of almost field seems to get hung-up. The magic of technology has not left the field of education untouched. ICT has brought a dramatic shift of education from teacher – centered to learner-centered. Earlier, Education was a uni-directional transfer of information from the teacher to the learner but the scenario today is not the same. It has changed the nature of face-to-face teaching and enabled the rapid growth of

blended and online courses. Especially, the field of ELT has been made authentic, easier, and interesting with the integration of Information and Communication Technologies .

OBJECTIVE

This paper tends to provide an overview of importance of ICT in teaching and learning of English as a second or a foreign language. It analyses the factors which make the integration of ICT in language teaching and learning successful. Moreover, it discusses the changing roles of teachers with ICT and the importance of regular teacher's training for effective employment of ICT tools in teaching.

IMPORTANCE OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The Indian Information Technology and industry accounts for a 5.9% of the country's GDP and export earnings as of 2009, while providing employment to a significant number of its tertiary sector workforce. More than 2.3 million people are employed in the sector either directly or indirectly, making it one of the biggest job creators in India and a mainstay of the national economy.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2003) defines ICTs as “basically information-handling tools- a varied set of goods, applications and services that are used to produce, store, process, distribute and exchange information. They include the ‘old’ ICTs of radio, television and telephone, and the ‘new’ ICTs of computers, satellite and wireless technology and the Internet. These different tools are now able to work together, and combine to form our ‘Networked world’ a massive infrastructure of interconnected telephone services, standardized computing hardware, the internet, radio and television, which reaches into every corner of the globe..”

IMPACT OF ICT ON LEARNING PROCESS & CHALLENGES

In this age of information and technology, the use of internet has brought many changes in teaching English. It is a highly useful tool which benefit both the learners and teachers to upgrade themselves from time to time. Information and Communication Technology or ICTs allow users to participate in a rapidly changing world in which work and other activities are increasingly transformed by access to varied and developing technologies.

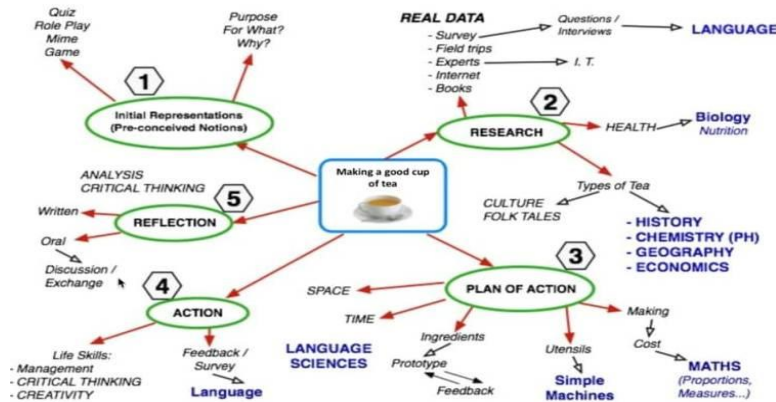
Inspite of the fact that ICT makes teaching and learning easier and interesting, at the same time, it offers new challenges for both instructors and students. There is a misconception of teachers being redundant or in other words, there is a misconception that the use of ICT in teaching would replace teachers from the classroom. In fact, new educational technologies do not curb the need for teachers but they call for a redefinition of their roles and profession.

In order to understand the factors or reasons which make changes in the roles of teacher, it would be better to discuss about ICT and how does it affect teaching and learning process, especially in ELT

RESOURCES & METHODOLOGY

In order to understand and explain the contents of ICT in Teaching and Learning of English Language and the changing roles of teachers with ICT various publications, articles, journals and multimedia and internet searches

were examined and acknowledged. The method used is analytical and descriptive. Both primary as well as secondary sources of information have been taken.



IMPACT LEARNING

ICTs stand for information and communication technologies and are defined as a diverse set of technological tools, resources, and pedagogies used to communicate, and to create, disseminate, store, and manage information. Information and Communication Technology has a great impact on learning objectives. Use of Information and Communication Technology in language learning makes the process of teaching and learning active, interesting and motivating. ICTs have positive effects on student attitudes toward the language teaching and learning. It is because, different resources like youtube channels audio clips, video clips in the target language to above learning objectives and various other use of ICT like teaching through smart boards and whiteboards make the lesson more interesting and learners get motivated to learn the lesson. Moreover, the use of computer based instruction increases self-confidence and self esteem of learners.

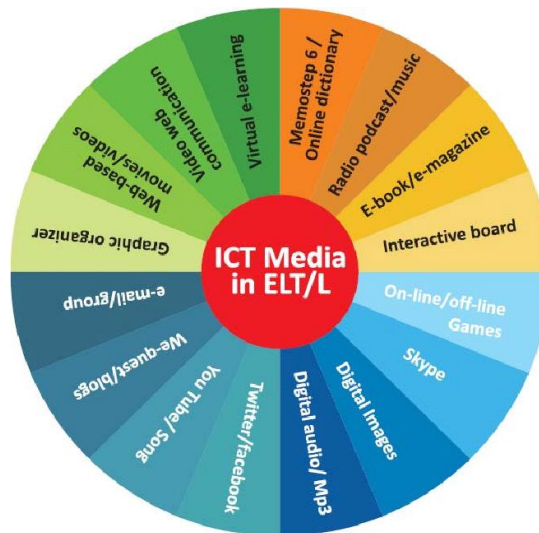
ROLE OF INTERNET ON EFFECTIVE LEARNING AND TARGET LANGUAGES

Information and Communication Technology, especially the Internet provides language learners with the opportunity to achieve the target language in real and authentic context. The Internet makes current and authentic materials in the target language, very easily and quickly accessible. ICTs not only provide sample materials but it also helps the learners to interact with the native speakers of the target language across the world. Especially, the field of ELT has been made authentic, easier, and interesting with the integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). According to Garrett, 1982, learners get an opportunity to interact with the native speakers of the target language and this helps in the development of one or more of the four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing because in order to interact, learners have to use or produce text meant for an audience in the target language. Confronting such challengeable situations is the touchstone for using the language in authenticity not artificially.

AVAILABILITY OF THE RESOURCES

The Internet – one of the important forms of ICT, gives access to an exponentially growing storehouse of information sources, almost unlimited networks of people and computers, and unprecedented learning and research opportunities. ICTs provide access to a variety of language teaching and learning resources that could help teachers and learners in teaching and learning language respectively. ICTs are very stimulating because of the availability of the learning materials whether it is computer-based or in the web; and students can learn at their

own place and own time. The availability of images, animation, audio and video clips help much more in presenting and practicing new language.



TARGET LEARNING AND STUDENT-CENTERED

Student-centered learning demands students spend at least some portion of their day working on personalized learning tasks or projects and working together to ensure the learning is not just individualized but that it is also meaningful and connected to the real-world. Exploring student interests (and interests that they may not even realize they have) is core to a great student-centered environment. Students also work on addressing competencies, or skills, and do so at their own pace.

With the help of ICT-based tools and the constantly growing number of available authentic language resources language teachers are able to give individual and personalized guidance to the learners. At the same time, with computers, the student can easily access, manipulate, modify, store and retrieve information which promotes greater autonomy in learning. The use of several media—audio, video, authentic contexts and real-world experiences help language learners with different learning style to assimilate the content according to their needs. Inevitably, the use of ICT in the classroom will change the role of learners, enabling them to exert more choice over how they approach study, requiring less direction from teachers. The teacher act as a guide and mentor make them realize the use of technology or ICTs in language learning can help learners overcome the limitation of time and resources and the process of individualized learning can be maximized. Students have the opportunity to choose the elements of language, their own level, pace and time of language learning.

COOPERATIVE LEARNING

Cooperative Learning is an instructional method in which students work in small groups to accomplish a **common learning goal** under the guidance of the teacher. The strategies offer students the possibility to learn by applying knowledge in an environment more similar to the one they will encounter in their future work life. Interaction with the native speakers of the target language is also very easily possible. Students are thus able to write, read, speak, listen, and react to a conversation using ICT as part of the language learning process. They are motivated to communicate and collaborate with peers to produce common products, for instance, wikis.

Teachers get the chance to **work on core competencies** and **on students' communication and soft skills**, which are valuable for students' success in life and work, integrating them in school curricula. The use of ICT in a language classroom provides opportunities for the development of cooperation and collaboration with the fellow learners and friends. Previously, students or classes would write letters or later even e-mails to each other. Today, using ICT they can 'Ms-Team', 'Zoom' Webex, 'Skype' or chat online, where they can not only write to each other in real-time, but also see each other and speak to each other online.

Cooperative learning strategies are content-free structures that can be reused in different school contexts and we are going to learn how to use some of them. Strategies can be used both in pairs and groups and are designed to **fulfill the target learning with** Positive interdependence, Individual accountability, Equal participation and Simultaneous interaction.

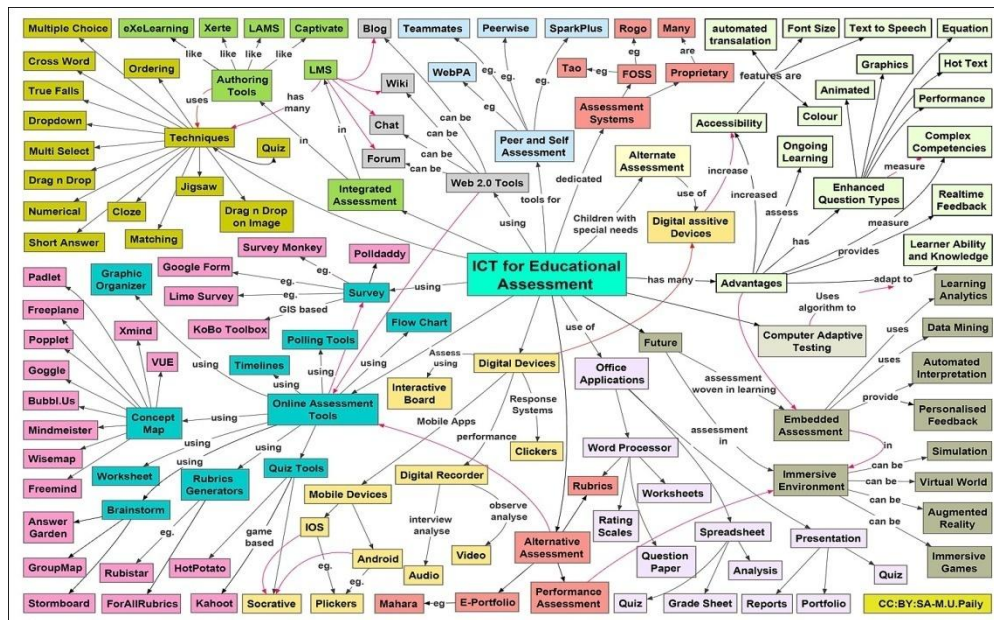
TOOLS & TECHNIQUES:

One of the major advantage of ICT in language teaching and learning is that it can successfully provide teaching and learning resources in multiple ways. Interconnected/networked computing and communications technologies and media have become essential tools of practically every profession and trade, including those of lawyers, doctors, artists, historians, electricians, mechanics, and salespersons. These devices make it possible to redistribute learning and work experiences over time and space. Tools employed in various professions and trades, such as word processors, spreadsheets, audio, video, and photo editing tools, models, visualizations, and mobile wireless devices in the form of audio clips, video or in the form of film. Moreover, ICTs facilitate different learning activities as testing, doing exercises and performing different pedagogical tasks or games.

Students are able to connect, access, and communicate with the wider world in ways that were unimaginable just a few years ago and that are continually changing. Particularly relevant for this framework is the fact that virtually all efforts to improve or create new technologies involve the use of ICT tools. And for many years to come, such novel technologies, computer-based and otherwise, will continue to bring about new approaches to education, work, entertainment, and daily life.

SELF-ASSESSMENT:

To achieve the learning outcomes of each learner evaluation criteria plays a great role in the teaching learning process. Assessment is a process that helps focus attention towards the actual learning outcomes of each student. Cumulative assessment helps to know the exact position of students learning objective /achievement and the progress that they have made is key to designing strategies for the further improvement of teaching and learning. Sharing such information with stakeholders across the education system is essential to meet information needs and support decision making at the classroom, school and education system level.



The examinations system in general, test the reading and writing skills of the students and totally neglect the listening and speaking skills, which are indispensable skills for any language. Accumulating student assessment information is essential to improve teaching and learning strategies and meet information needs at the level of students, parents, teachers, school leaders, policy makers and the general public. Students need to be clear about what they are aiming to learn and which indicators and criteria are appropriate to evaluate progress and inform future learning. Engaging students as active participants in assessment will help them develop capabilities in analyzing their own learning and becoming self-directed learners. Parents typically want to know how their children are doing and progressing in relation to expected standards and in comparison to others in the same age group.

Providing assessment information to parents is key to building strong school-home partnerships by making parents aware of learning goals, their children’s progress and priorities for further learning.

The listening capacity can be tested through computer-assisted packages like listening to a dialogue/passage and answering the questions or listening to lectures and then answering short questions or true or false statements. It will enhance their talents for taking international tests because many competitive exams follow such a pattern to test the grasping ability of the students.

ROLES OF TEACHERS & IMPLEMENTATION OF ICT

Researchers and administrators have recognized that the introduction of the new media into educational institution calls for a change in learning and teaching patterns “The Impact of Information and Communication Technologies on the Teaching of foreign Languages and on the Role of Teachers of Foreign language” a report commissioned by the Directorate General of Education and Culture of the European Commission, 2003 very clearly illustrates the change in the roles of teachers with the introduction of ICT in education. The above discussion highlights the points that clarify the needs and importance of change in the roles of teacher with the proliferation of ICT in education.

TEACHER AS FRIEND PHILOSOPHER AND GUIDE

The tradition teaching practice has been changed since a decade. Teachers today, are no more all knowing gurus who dominated the classes of yesteryears rather, the classes now have become more of learner- centered where teachers are no more leaders or monitors but have become facilitators or mentors. As facilitators, firstly, teachers have to be flexible in order to respond to the needs of the students. Secondly, he must be aware of a variety of materials available for improving students' language skill. The language textbook is no longer the sole source of information. Authentic Multimedia programmes are available, showing how native speakers interact in the target language; electronic dictionaries and encyclopedias are available for instant reference and much more resources are available online that help develop learners language skills. Teachers need to know how to teach learners to use all this material effectively.

TEACHER TRAINING- ICT COMPETENCIES REQUIRED OF LANGUAGE TEACHERS

Training for teachers especially to make teachers competent in using ICT in their classroom is the only key to make teachers walk hand in hand with the present world of globalization. In many developing countries, however, most teachers have minimal or no ICT skills themselves and therefore cannot develop these in learners. Two of the most important supports for ICT integration into teaching and learning are effective Initial Teacher Education and Continuing Professional Development .

The 21st century education requires the inevitable importance of communications and information in teachers to upgrade their knowledge and to acquire competency in using ICT effectively and creatively. As discussed in the roles of teachers, language teachers working in a media-rich environment will need to:

- recognise the individual learning problems of learners;
- make a careful and considered choice concerning the use of the media;
- check the truth of information content offered;
- develop efficient search techniques and be capable of conducting effective research
- with the help of the computer to get useful resources
- be able to use standard software confidently and competently;
- make wise and critical choices of information found.

THE USE OF ICT IN CLASS ROOM

The present education system became child centric and communicative. The classroom is now changing its look from the traditional one i. e. from one way to two way communications. Now teachers as well as students participate in classroom discussion. So the teacher should prepare to cope up with different technology for using them in the classroom for making teaching learning vibrant and interesting. For effective implementation of certain student centric methodologies such as project-based learning which puts the students in the role of active researches and technology becomes the appropriate tool. Teaching through Smart Class/Board become more impressive and effective. It enables the flawless expression of the content with digital view & impressive illustration. ICT has enabled better and swifter communication; presentation of ideas more effective and relevant way. It is an effective tool for information acquiring-thus students are encouraged to look for information from multiple sources and they are now more informed then before. So for this reason ICT is very much necessary for Teacher Education.

CONCLUSION

ICT helps the teacher to update the new knowledge, skills to use the new digital tools and resources. By using and acquire the knowledge of ICT, student teacher will become effective teachers. ICT is one of the major factors for producing the rapid changes in our society.

The use of ICT has countless advantages in language teaching. The growth in the use of ICT like digital language lab, smartboard, whiteboard, chatting, audio- video chat through Skype, Zoom, Ms- Team, Webex, Google Meet & personalized application for online classes and many other uses have provided teaching and learning English language in a very real and authentic context or environment.

Main area of concern in this study on ICT and changing roles of teachers of EFL and ESL has been helpful to know the importance of ICT in language learning and teaching, factors that make teaching and learning English effective with ICT, the need for change in the traditional roles of teachers, new roles of teachers with ICT and importance of regular training to make teachers ICT competent. In addition to this, the study highlights the point that schools and universities should not only be equipped with ICT tools but the teachers should be trained and made competent in ICT skills.

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